

Development Engineering Advisory Board Meeting
March 5, 2009
2:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Public Service Center
6th Floor Training Room

In attendance: Board members – Eric Golemo, John Graves, Greg Jellison, Steve Madsen, Jerry Nutter, Tim Schauer, Steve Wall; County staff – Kevin Gray, Ginger Blair

Visitors: David Bottamini, Jerry Dolezal, Carolyn Heniges, Paul Scarpelli, Steve Schulte

Administrative Actions

- Nutter started the meeting with introduction of audience and board members.
- The February 5, 2009, meeting minutes were adopted without edits.
- Parking Lot items were reviewed; no new items were added.
- There were no new correspondences to review.

Development Fee Strategy

Jerry Dolezal presented to the group on behalf of Glenn Olson, regarding the draft proposal for the Clark County Community Development fee structure. The handout he provided listed some ideas that incorporated input received from the Commissioners, staff, developers, and builders. Dolezal presented to the group with the intention of receiving informal approval to move forward based on these ideas.

The following ideas were presented:

- Bundled fees possibly patterned after the City of Vancouver's.
- Bundled fee charges will include a base fee + hourly charges for any costs that exceed that base.
 - Staff estimates size of project and how many staff hours required.
 - Possibly charge half up front, keep track of hours. If review finished for less than client receives rebate, if go over estimated hours then more money is required.
- Base fees and hourly charges for bundled fees are based on costing study results for labor by area (building, development review, etc.)
- Charges for individual fees are based on costing study results for labor by area.
- Time tracking will be by parcel, applicant, and case type (type of activity, like land division or short plat).
 - Time tracking is tied to Tidemark and there are challenges. Need to get the tracking information into Tidemark like the City of Vancouver does.
- Increased efficiency is built in this new fee proposal because Community Development is only staffed with 80% of the hours needed to complete its forecasted work load.
- The proposed increases do not include charges for stabilization or for system replacement.
- As a result, the total amount of the proposed increases will be well below costing study estimates and structure to simply recover costs.

The group discussed the following:

- Public Works uses Projects & Grants software to track time and expenses by project and employee. Development Engineering is currently able to track time and expenses by project using work order numbers in the time keeping system.
- If a project is proficient, there will be less fees and a quicker review.
- The question was asked as to what staff will be creating the estimates of the review time required. An answer is not available at this time.
 - City of Ridgefield uses a percentage of the cost method.

- o Maybe start with a deposit and then keep track of hours as the review gets started.
- There is the potential for a lot of staff time to be required to estimate the project and then manage the time spent on the project.
- Developers see the county review as an obstacle, and if they are paying by the hour for someone to “stand in their way” they are going to be critical of the amount of time spent.
- There is never going to be a system that is exact. Some jobs make money and some jobs lose money. The economic conditions force us to find ways to make a project happen. Perhaps the county can compare to a past project “X”, is the new project easier or harder than project X.
- City of Ridgefield sees problems with one five lot short plat being harder, and therefore taking longer to review, than another five lot short plat because of the varying circumstances.
- City of Ridgefield spends a lot of time tracking hours like a consultant does. When requested, they print out time sheets to show where the time was spent. The time is not negotiated, but the information is provided when requested.
- What is staff’s motivation to be efficient when charging an hourly rate?
 - o Economic development. Pride that projects can get in and out the door so that they can get built.
 - o Elected officials are motivated.
 - o Both staff and developers currently have the same goal of better efficiency. Everyone has gone through cuts, and everyone has the same incentive not to have more cuts.
- A consultant’s fees may be higher, but they can show that the county fees will be lower for their projects because their plans will be more complete.
- Maybe have bookends established. The county will never charge less than X and never more than Y, unless it is a project like a hospital where it would need to be open ended.
- The structure needs to allow the ability to purchase more of staff’s time for review.

It was determined that DEAB can not comment on these ideas without receiving additional information, including which fee categories they would apply to.

It was decided that at the April meeting, DEAB will provide Dolezal with a specific list of information needed in order for the group to comment on the proposal.

BOCC Orientation

Kevin Gray addressed the group to discuss the Public Works report that was provided to the Commissioners. The report provides information regarding who Public Works is, what it does, what it costs, what are the goals and challenges, and what are the performance measures. For the DEAB, this report also shows how Development Engineering fits in Public Works.

The Development Engineering budget is 3.8 million over two years. The revenue shown for *PW Intradep. Staff Reimbursables* is the support received from the Clean Water program for the Development Inspectors. Interdepartmental reimbursements are more than just revenue, they allow Public Works to move staff to the capital side and pay for them out of the capital budget.

The anticipated expenses and development fee revenues come from Dolezal’s work and the DEAB participation with Adriana Prata of the Budget Office.

The current business model for Development Engineering is to base the amount of review time on the fees received. The review time spent is being tracked, and if \$1,000 in fees is received for a project than only \$1,000 worth of review time is being spent on it. General Fund supplements are not being used for reviews.

Development Engineering goals include completing reviews within timelines, delivering a balanced revenue and expense budget, and tracking performance measures. This report includes the annual

information that was provided to the Commissioners; Sue Stepan also provides monthly information to be monitored.

Stepan has done a lot of good work to provide this information. All projects since January 1, 2009, have been monitored and Development Engineering can match expenses to revenues for these reviews. A considerable amount of time and work was required to set up these systems. The goal is to be within 5%.

Having this information allows Public Works to manage and shift their resources. The time entry takes a lot of effort, but it is essential to be able to say that for the amount of fees received, X numbers of hours were spent, and this is how they were spent.

An example is Pre-application Conferences. The fees received for a Pre-application Conference allow for an average of 3.7 hours of review time, including the hour sitting in the conference. This does not allow for a complete review before the conference.

Staff has been instructed that their priorities are to hit the milestones while staying with the budget. The time can not be spent to help solve all of the problems. Staff and applicants are already seeing the challenge, that with limited time there is limited value in some cases.

Staff is operating within the constraints of time, money, and resources, and is looking at the level of service that can be provided. Their focus is to look for life safety issues, code compliance, and good infrastructure. Staff can no longer provide a Quality Control (QC) check on the plans, or provide services such as calculating the curb returns. If projects have issues that can not be resolved in the allotted time, staff will have to issue denials.

Additionally, when projects do not work in the field because the county is no longer providing a QC check, or a curb return doesn't drain, it will be the developer's responsibility to fix it.

Gray credited Stepan and her staff for making these changes, adding that it is going to take some time. Once staff meets timelines and budgets, then they will begin to focus on efficiencies and equality.

Development Engineering is funding the DEAB with their General Fund supplements with the hope that DEAB will help the county make these changes. Some of the changes are significant, there will be bumps along the way, but hopefully the changes will be for the better.

Gray encouraged the DEAB to talk to Stepan and staff about these changes.

Comments received from the group included:

- An internal appeal process may be needed to allow some flexibility. Applicants could have the ability to ask a department head to be a referee between them and staff.
- There is some excitement that the county's business is coming closer to the consultant's kind of work. The submittal of more complete plans can help the county be more efficient.
- No one wants to see a project denied because there wasn't sufficient time to review it.
- The report to the Commissioners is a good report and it would be nice if Development Services could provide something like it.

2008 Annual Report to BOCC

The group reviewed the draft 2008 Annual Report to the BOCC. The goals were to determine if their priorities for 2009 were accurately reflected, and if there are any formal recommendations they would like to make to the BOCC.

It was determined that the priorities for 2009 to be included in the report are:

- A. Continue to discuss and comment on the cost study project and development fee proposals.
- B. Review Development Engineering's efficiency and service levels, and how they are affected by the fee structure and current economy.
- C. Encourage and comment on the re-write of Title 40 for simplicity and clarity.
- D. Monitor the implementation and effects of the new stormwater ordinance.
- E. Continue to review and comment as requested by the BOCC and/or senior staff on project specific technical engineering issues.

DEAB members acknowledged the draft document and supported the information included. Nutter and Jellison will revise and provide the final version for the group to approve at the April meeting.

2009 Work Plan Priorities

The group decided to review the Work Plan Priorities document individually and approve it at the April meeting.

April Meeting Focus

It was determined that the agenda for the April meeting will include:

- Discussion with Jerry Dolezal regarding the information DEAB needs before it can make a comment or recommendation about the proposed fee structure.
- Review and evaluate Development Engineering's current process for reviews with the fees being received. Example, what hours are allowed for each fee? Where can the process be streamlined?

It was suggested that Chad Eiken from the City of Vancouver should be invited to discuss their fee process.

Public Comment Period

No additional comments were received at this time.

Meeting Minutes Prepared by: Ginger Blair

Reviewed by: Kevin Gray

Board Adopted: April 9, 2009

Development Engineering Advisory Board - Parking Lot Items					
#	PRIORITY*	SUBJECT	DATE REQUESTED	ORIGINATOR	ACTION
1.	2	Invite other public agencies within county to collaborate on regional issues; possibly a dedicated mtg.	11/9/2006		
2.	2	Formalize/better advertise complaint process on specific projects. (maybe a Customer service input form for ENG applicants)	12/7/2006		
3.	2	Discuss final lot grading with Jim Muir.	2/1/2007		
4.	2	Clarification and compilation of policies	5/03/07		
5.	3	DEAB to meet with the Neighborhood Assoc of Clark County to present goals and receive feedback.	1/4/2007		
6.	2	Routing of signing/stripping plans	8/21/2008	Schulte	
7.	2	Create a Type 1A land use category (between Type 1 and 2)	9/4/2008	DEAB	Stepan to coordinate with Snell
10.	1	ADA Compliance	10/06/08	DEAB	
* Priorities: 1 = High/Important, 2 = Average, 3 = Low/long-term goal					